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FEBRUARY 25, 2010

# THE FRONTLINE

**Spc. Gaelen Lowers**  
*3rd Sustainment Bde. Public Affairs*

The 139th Military Police Company, 385th Military Police Battalion was formed a little more than two and a half years ago, making them the youngest MP company in the battalion.

In the short time they have existed, they have accomplished a plethora

of amazing tasks, said Col. Stuart McRae, the 3rd Infantry Division rear detachment commander.

“They deployed to the most dangerous area of Iraq,” he said. “They supported and trained more than 5,000 Iraqi military police. They completed more than 1,200 patrols, more than 700 combined training events, more than 900 meetings

with key leaders throughout their area of operations, more than 100 community police patrols and they maintained more than 30 combined check points.

“But what I find most amazing is that over the course of this past year, although they came close a couple of times, every Soldier that deployed with the 139th came home with the 139th,” he continued.

On Feb. 16, the 139th MP Co. marched across Cottrell Field at Fort Stewart, greeted by friends, family and well wishers for their welcome home ceremony after a year-long deployment to Iraq.

“He’s been gone for 12 months,” said Tifanie Osborn, wife of Spc. Dain Osborn. “I can’t wait to give him a big hug. I can’t wait to just spend some time with him.”

See WELCOME

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Spc. Cassandra Monroe

**Sergeant Tony Dowden, a tanker with the battalion commander's personal security detachment for 1/64 Armor, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID, scans his sector during a mission in Ninewa province, Iraq, Feb. 8.**

## 'Rogue Country' perform security missions in Iraq

**Spc. Cassandra Monroe**  
*135th MPAD, 3rd ID Public Affairs*

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq** – The morning air was still as the sun broke through the skies above the headquarters of 1st Battalion, 64th Armor, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,

3rd Infantry Division nicknamed “Rogue Country.”

Although it seemed no one was around, the quiet sound of muffled voices coming from the battalion commander's personal security detachment could be heard in the distance as they prepared for the day's mission.

See CHOSEN

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## On-post fundraiser nets \$10K for Haiti

**Denise Ethridge**  
*Special to the Frontline*

In an outpouring of compassion, 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers assigned to Fort Stewart and their families emptied their pockets to donate to the American Red Cross for Haiti Relief.

A check for \$10,481 was presented to Alphonsa Oliver, senior station manager for the American Red Cross at Fort Stewart, by garrison commander Col. Kevin Milton, Command Sgt. Maj. James Ervin, senior installation chaplain Col. Warren Kirby and chaplain resource manager Maj. Albert Gherich Friday, in front of

Fort Stewart's main chapel.

Colonel Milton said about 500 people who attended religious services on Jan. 29 at Fort Stewart donated to a designated offering collected by army chaplains to assist victims of the earthquake in Haiti. Army chaplains normally schedule 10 special offerings each year, he said.

See HAITI

Page 2A

## TF Falcon Soldiers come to the aid of avalanche victims

**Spc. Monica K. Smith**  
*3rd CAB, TF Falcon Public Affairs*

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** – Soldiers from the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, flew to the aid of avalanche victims in northern Afghanistan, Feb. 9.

A series of avalanches struck the Salang Pass, a major route between Kabul and northern Afghanistan, early that morning, sending Apaches from TF Knighthawk, TF Falcon, into action.

“Our Apaches provided overhead security and located (landing zones) for aircraft to land and pick up victims,” said Staff Sgt. Tremayne Gilchrist, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF Falcon and battle non-commissioned officer for TF Falcon. “They also searched for people we couldn't see. They gave the ground units grid coordinates when they found other survivors.”

As the sun rose higher, Chinooks from Company B, TF Knighthawk, TF Falcon took to the skies, landing at the Salang Pass tunnel, the highest tunnel in the world, to gather survivors and bring them to Bagram Airfield. The passenger terminal at Bagram Airfield was temporarily shut down and re-designed as an initial entry point where medical teams and volunteers were poised to assist the incoming mass casualty.

“TF Falcon medics were some of the first people on the scene, and they did an outstanding job,” said Lt. Col. Katrina Hall, HHC, TF Falcon, and brigade surgeon. “Sergeant First Class (Shylonda) Wallace, a medic with HHC, TF Falcon, directed patients where to go. Sergeant First Class Stephen Cardona, medic with TF Workhorse, TF Falcon, organized the site, and the medics handled the situation efficiently and were professional when working with the patients. They all responded well and took on whatever job was needed.”



Spc. Monica K. Smith

**Afghan victims of an avalanche walk out of the back of a Chinook with B Co., Task Force Knighthawk, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Falcon at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Feb. 9.**

See AVALANCHE

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# Defender 6 sends: Army Community Covenant- what gratitde looks like

**Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch**  
*IMCOM Commanding General*

As our Nation commits to preserving freedom through the uncertainty of deployments and conflicts across the world, Americans give us a special gift -- embracing Soldiers and their Families with sincere support. It warms my heart to see adults, children, organizations and businesses that represent all walks of life sending care packages to deployed Soldiers and extending special invitations when they return. In a larger way, the Army Community Covenant generates a great deal of community support for Army Families while their Soldiers are away.

The Secretary of the Army created the ACC in 2008 to build mutual relationships and strengthen bonds between Soldiers, Families and American communities. It fosters and sustains effective state and community partnerships with the Army to improve the quality of life for Soldiers and their Families. On the ground, the ACC accomplishes two things. First, it recognizes the selfless service of community volunteers, highlighting their great personal contributions. It also shows Soldiers the compassion and support of the American public.

Now in its third year, the ACC kicked off with a series of signing ceremonies affirming the mutual support and trust between the military and local communities. To date, there have been more than 450 signing ceremonies.

While the signing ceremonies are the public, outward display of a vital mutual relationship -- support from communities helps build resilience in our Families -- the Army Community Covenant is a highly beneficial two-way partnership that strengthens ties between our Soldiers

and home town America.

The generosity of America's neighborhoods, towns, cities, and counties is astounding. Every day communities devise new ways, both small and large, to demonstrate their appreciation for Soldiers and Families. Adults, children, organizations, and businesses send care packages to deployed Soldiers, offer emergency relief to Families in need, welcome Soldiers home after deployment, and most importantly provide a support network to complement and enhance Soldier well being. From students baking cookies for deployed units, to elected leaders promoting legislation that builds equity in school transition for children of Military Families, each is a gift.

Volunteers from all walks of life devote countless hours to giving back to those who defend our Nation's freedom. Here are a few Community Covenant initiatives to give you an idea of the scope of support that target financial, employment, health, youth programs, training, or other needs unique to a particular garrison or group of Soldiers or Family members:

- Camps focus on fun learning experiences for young people that last a lifetime. Some camp sponsors are private organizations like the 4-H Clubs, Girl Scouts, Operation Military Kids; state National Guardsponsor others. Children form new, lasting friendships with children from a variety of military backgrounds.
- Educator seminars help teachers learn what makes life different for chil-



dren with parents serving in the military. From frequent moves to deployment and redeployment, military children have a special set of experiences that moves with them, school to school, and that affect their education experience.

- All volunteer Adopt-A-Unit programs support deployed units in-theatre and celebrate returning units with event invitations. These programs also enthusiastically remember those currently deployed through the Yellow Ribbon program, encouraging community members to display yellow ribbons at their homes and offices.

- Financial support programs from states, counties and private organizations take many forms, whether help with property taxes, assistance for Soldiers of all components who deploy in support of the Overseas Contingency Operations, or grants or no-interest loans for emergencies for Reserve Component Soldiers.

- Programs abound to help Families focus on building quality time together. Reduced or free admission to state parks, amusement attractions, and sports events help Soldiers and Families enjoy memorable time together. Retreats for Families of fallen Soldiers build strong networks of friendship for those members of the Army Family who have experienced the ultimate loss.

- There are community-based organizations that solicit donations exclusively to fund a variety of programs with 100 percent of all donations going to the designated programs. In-kind

donations from community members and businesses entirely fund administration expenses.

- Education support for Soldiers and Family members through scholarships, continuing education opportunities, or grants helps further both individual and Army readiness through access to education.

- Special programs honor the children of wounded warriors, and Families and children of fallen heroes with personalized, commemorative items like handmade quilts.

These best practices embody selfless service on the part of Americans around the country, but there are many more. I mention them here as great examples of how citizens endure in their support with lasting relationships in the face of multiple and lengthy periods of military conflict. The Community Covenant Web site, <http://www.army.mil/community>, is a great resource for Soldiers, Family Members, leaders, and community organizations to see best practices from around the country. Follow the latest developments and get ideas for your community by following the ACC on Facebook, and join in the discussion on Twitter, both linked via the ACC homepage.

As the Army reflects the face of America, the Army Community Covenant reflects the face of America's gratitude. It's all about relationships. Go out of your way to thank a Community Covenant partner for their active caring for Soldiers and their Families. Work together with community leaders, private organizations, faith-based groups, and individual American citizens.

Help America help Soldiers by always taking to heart what partnering opportunities may be possible.

# Military Saves: Build wealth, not debt

**Pamela Flemions, M.S.**  
*Accredited Financial Counselor*

If you believe this is a tough economy, you are not alone. Many Soldiers and Families are challenged with starting and maintaining an effective financial plan. While it is true Soldiers and Families are afforded a wealth of benefits to enhance military pay, there is still much vulnerability.

In 2003 a report by National Consumer Law Center In Harm's Way -- At Home: Consumer Scams and the Direct Targeting of America's Military and Veterans found that scores of consumer-abusing businesses directly target this country's active duty military daily. The report also said military personnel are ripe targets for consumer predators because many are low-income but have steady income and are easy for debt collectors to track

Several laws have been enacted to help protect Active Duty personnel and their Families such as the

Military Lending Act that limits the annual percentage rate on payday loans, vehicle title loans, and tax refund-anticipations loans to 36 percent. Ordinarily, these financial products could average up to 400 percent.

What can Soldiers and Families do to protect themselves and weather the tough economy? The National Consumer Law Center Report recommended the following: "Financial awareness basic-training" should include the fundamentals of budgeting and spending, debt control, use of credit, insurance, long-term goal setting, consumer scams and more. Yes - "Knowledge is Power".

The Department of Defense recognizes Feb. 21-28 as Military Saves Week. The Military Saves program encourages personnel to take a pledge to commit to financial security through developing a personal savings plan, establishing an emergency fund, enrolling in the Thrift Savings Plan, and for eligible deploying servicemembers, the Savings Deposit Program.

All the aforementioned are key elements in building wealth through the development of financial fitness habits. Soldiers and Families can learn more about Military Saves through the campaign's Web site at [www.militarysaves.org](http://www.militarysaves.org). Army Community Service hosted a series of workshops at Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield, Feb. 23 and today to show Soldiers and Family Members how to increase their pay by 10 percent, save hundreds of dollars by paying off debt quicker, and how to improve their credit scores.

This same information is still available through Army Community Service's Financial Readiness Program that helps resolve financial problems and reduce the stress associated with money worries. ACS provides free one-on-one counseling, classes, and workshops on the subject. Please call Fort Stewart ACS at (912) 767-5058 if you have any questions, to register for classes, or to find out the various activities during the remainder of Military Saves Week.

## HAITI ————— from Page 1A



Oliver said the donation indicates the generous nature of the Fort Stewart community and its 3rd ID Soldiers.

The Red Cross official said the International Red Cross has so far raised more than \$284 million for Haiti Relief and has helped 1.3 million people in Haiti, to date.

"The Red Cross will stay there (in Haiti) until the last dollar is spent," Oliver said.

Kirby said the chief of Army chaplains "put out the call" for the special offering in late January.

The call was heard by Soldiers and their Families at installations across the

country and overseas, he said.

"A total of \$531,000 (Army-wide) was raised," Chap. Kirby said. "And this represents just the religious (military) community."

Chaplain Kirby said the amount of money raised is amazing considering it was raised "in just one hour on one day."

In addition, Soldiers assigned to Fort Stewart who are currently deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan also contributed, the senior chaplain said.

"This is from the pockets of Soldiers who gave while they're giving to another fight," Chap. Kirby said.

Randy Murray  
Fort Stewart Public Affairs

**Command Sergeant Major James Ervin, Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield garrison command sergeant major; Col. Kevin Milton, Stewart-Hunter garrison commander; Alphonsa Oliver, senior station manager for Stewart-Hunter Red Cross; Chap. (Col.) Warren Kirby, main post chaplain; and Chap. (Maj.) Albert Ghergich, chaplain resource manager; pose outside Fort Stewart's Main Post Chapel with a check to the Red Cross for \$10,481.33.**

# 10th Trans continues mission in Haiti



2nd Lt. Lovetta Tate

**Sergeant Thomas Dean and Spc. Christopher Johnston, 10th Trans. Co., take a photo with a Haitian child while serving on their unit's humanitarian mission in Haiti.**

**2nd Lt. Lovetta Tate**  
*10th Transportation Company*

**PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti** -- The Ghostriders of 10th Transportation Company, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division worked with United Nations and the World Food Program to distribute food from warehouses in Haiti.

The Soldiers escorted empty trucks to warehouses to be loaded with rice, grains, wheat and flour from the warehouses to the Humanitarian Staging Area, where they received designated points to distribute the food throughout the city.

Along with assisting at the distribution points, the Soldiers visited a local orphanage in Haiti. Unlike the other locations where aid has been delivered by the Soldiers in the aftermath of the earthquake, the visit to the orphanage, titled "Intrepid," had the Soldiers feeling an outpouring of affection and love for their assistance.

The troops' encounter with the children of the orphanage was uplifting to both the orphans and the Soldiers' spirits.



Photos by Pfc. Gregory Gieske

**Chief Warrant Officer Reynaldo Relinos, Company B, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, applies his welding torch to a tank being restored by the Spartan Brigade outside Mosul, Iraq. The tank will eventually be given to the Iraqi Army.**



# Spartan Brigade bridges gap with restored tank to Iraqi forces

**Maj. Stephen Holt**  
*2nd HBCT Public Affairs*

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq** – Sergeant Mark Wheeler, Company B, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, takes a moment to look over his work and to run his hand over the rough and dirty surface of the Russian T-55 tank sitting in his maintenance bay.

He doesn't see the rust or dirt that makes his job seem impossible. In three months, he hopes to have this tank running, so it can be presented to the Iraqi Army. Fixing this broken tank, which was sentenced to a junkyard and making it run before presenting it to the Iraqi Security Forces his unit is partnered with, is a project being chaired by the Spartan Brigade.

"The engine is in excellent shape; the transmission is in excellent shape," Sgt. Wheeler said. "I opened the covers on the engine. I've seen race car engines that look worse than that. It's beautiful. It looks like they put 500 hours on it and parked it."

Progress on the restoration is going slow, but in the end, according to Sgt. Wheeler, the finished product will be something everyone can be proud of.

"Progress is a little slower than where I want it to be, but we're making headway," Sgt. Wheeler said. "There are things we're doing on this that normally we wouldn't have to do or go as far, but I don't turn out anything that's not quality."

"My plan is to have the engine running in one

month and fully mission capable in three months. The rifling for the gun is perfect and can be functional in one hour. The breach is a little rusty but can be cleaned up. Once it's up and running, my first drive will be to take it to the chow hall where everyone can see it."

Soldiers curiosity is sparked when they pass by the maintenance bay and see the old tank parked inside. So they stop to check its progress. They ask Sgt. Wheeler where he will get the parts needed to finish the project.

"We're trying to take this tank and not order anything other than expendable items like hoses and bolts," Sgt. Wheeler answers. "We're trying to take the tanks on hand and use parts from them to make it functional. What we can't come up with, we'll fabricate."

According to Lt. Col. James Kazmierczak, 26th BSB commander, his Soldiers from Maintenance Company B take the tank restoration personally.

"The Soldiers look on it as a personal challenge," Lt. Col. Kazmierczak said. "They want to say, 'Here's what it looked like before, and here's what it looks like now.'"

Progress on the project is done a little at a time, as the mechanics use what time they have available when they are not working on other vehicles needing repairs in the shop.

Working on the tank gives the mechanics a chance to gain valuable experience in learning how to fix different engine types, and it is one way to relieve stress.

"The Soldiers want to come and help out," Sgt.

Wheeler said. "Whoever is stressed can come and work on the tank and get unstressed. It's kind of like the mental health stress dog."

For Colonel Charles E. A. Sexton, 2nd HBCT commander, having his mechanics work on restoring run-down vehicles not only improves their ability to work on different engines but bridges a gap for the Iraqi Army.

"Giving this tank to the Iraqis shows them what people are capable of if they apply themselves," Col. Sexton said. "It bridges a gap between the U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces and illustrates that hard work and desire can build something to be proud of."

Sergeant Wheeler said the tank being restored is a Russian T-55 or Chinese T-69 sold to the Iraqi Army as far as he can tell.

The difference between the two is which modifications were added in the form of better turret shape, improved chemical protection, improved fire-control equipment or night-vision equipment.

He said he hopes once the Iraqis are given the tank, they will continue to provide maintenance to keep it running.

For now though, he and the other Soldiers in his maintenance crew are having a blast restoring the tank to its original condition. After all, he says, not everyone has the chance to restore an Iraqi tank.

When asked how he can possibly restore an Iraqi tank rusting in a junkyard for so long to serve as a gift to the Iraqis, Sgt. Wheeler smiles and proudly affirms his battalion motto – "No challenge too great."

**An Iraqi tank chosen for restoration sits inside the 26th Brigade Support Battalion maintenance bay after being recovered from a junkyard outside Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq.**



Courtesy Photo

**ABOVE:** Soldiers from 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd HBCT, pull an Iraqi tank from a junkyard outside Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq, to transport it to the bay for restoration. The tank is part of a project to restore a tank and present it to the Iraqi Army.

**LEFT:** Sergeant Mark Wheeler, Company B, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd HBCT, examines wiring inside the tank engine compartment to determine its serviceability. He plans to have the engine operational in a month and fully mission capable in three months.



# Marne Faces Marne Places

## 75th Ranger Soldier named USASOC Medic of the Year

**Tracy A. Bailey**  
*75th Ranger Regiment Public Affairs*

Braving a hail of automatic gunfire during an intense fire fight, Sgt. Bryan C. Rippee, less than ten feet away from the tip of the enemy's weapon, assessed the situation, took charge, and rapidly began treatment of the wounded.

The intense close-quarters gunfire exchange between militants and Rangers while clearing the compound had left one Ranger wounded and unresponsive in the center of the room. With gun fire and grenades continuing to cross the room, Ranger medic Sgt. Rippee exposed himself to enemy fire in order to suppress the enemy. Gaining fire superiority he noticed another Ranger also wounded.

"Someone once said the best medicine on the battlefield is fire superiority," says Sgt. Rippee, underplaying the role he played. "As a medic, I am in a position to benefit the force and strive to be able to help in combat both as a medic and a Soldier."

Sergeant Rippee began treating the chest wounds while a Ranger assault element moved forward to neutralize the enemy threat with small arms and hand grenades. Sergeant Rippee used his body to shield the casualty from the explosions and continued treatment. As an emergency medical technician moved into the room, Sgt. Rippee directed him to assess and treat the severely damaged left arm of a second casualty. Sergeant Rippee continued to direct care and treatment until additional medical personnel arrived.

Captain Andrew D. Fisher, 1st Ranger Battalion Physician Assistant, and a man who knows Sgt. Rippee well, had this to say of the Ranger medic that day.

"Recognizing the severity of the wounds, Sgt. Rippee rapidly began his initial assessment and treatment. At the risk of being engaged by the enemy, Sgt. Rippee took the necessary steps to

secure and treat the casualty. I have deployed with Sgt. Rippee on all of his deployments and have witnessed many of his heroic and valorous actions."

For that day in Iraq, Sgt. Bryan C. Rippee was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device.

It was for this type of repeated selfless service and courage that Sgt. Bryan C. Rippee, a combat medic assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment stationed at Hunter Army Airfield, was named the 2009 U.S. Army Special Operations Command Medic of the Year. The nomination consisted of a two page recommendation from the combat medic's supervisors and endorsement from the medic's chain of command.

Eighteen nominee packets were submitted and reviewed by the Command Sergeant Major of U.S. Army Special Operations Command. While all the candidate's packets were strong, Sgt. Rippee's consistent bravery and efforts as a combat medic in multiple actions seemed to set him apart.

Sergeant Bryan C. Rippee has been with the battalion since August 2007. Throughout his time in the 75th Ranger Regiment, Sgt. Rippee has proven over and over his mettle as a combat medic both on and off the battlefield.

In the fall of 2009, serving with 1st Ranger Battalion in Afghanistan, while conducting a night time operation, a team of Rangers were critically wounded when they encountered an improvised explosive device. Sergeant Rippee, who witnessed the event from about 40 meters away, ran into the unsecure blast area without regard for his own safety, and begin treating and conducting triage.

"My first reaction was to run like hell



**Sgt. Bryan C. Rippee**

towards the explosion and the Rangers; I knew there would be a lot of casualties," said Sgt. Rippee. "I bolted down the road through the smoke and dust and came upon a wounded Ranger and began assessing and treating him. We are trained to treat wounded Rangers by the severity of the wounds, not how bad the wounds look," said Sgt.

Rippee.

After the Casualty Collection Point was established, Sgt. Rippee assisted in the movement of the wounded and continued treating the Rangers until medical evacuation arrived.

In that encounter, Sgt. Rippee, a native of Riverside, Calif., was credited with saving the lives of two of the six wounded.

Sergeant Rippee's finest hour may have come during that same rotation when a mid-air collision of two helicopters in route to a target compound instantly turned the assault mission into a combat search and rescue as the remainder of the force quickly landed at the crash. Rapidly exiting the helicopter he was on, Sgt. Rippee immediately ran to the burning wreckage. With ammunition and fuel cooking off around him, and the screams of the injured trapped in the flaming aircraft piercing the night, Sgt. Rippee and a Ranger squad leader pulled one of the survivors from the burning airframe, carrying him 40 meters then conducting the medical efforts that would save that Soldier's life.

For Sgt. Rippee, who doesn't consider himself a hero, courage seems to be an ingrained trait, apparent to his fellow Rangers and supervisors.

"Sergeant Rippee is a devoted and extraordinary medic. His performance both in training and in combat are the epitome what a United States Army

Special Operations noncommissioned officer should Be, Know and Do," said Capt. Fisher. "He is an immeasurable asset to our organization. His sense of ethics and discipline is beyond reproach."

Sergeant's Rippee's training includes Basic Combat Training, Advanced Individual Training—Combat Medic Course, Basic Airborne Course, Ranger Assessment and Selection Program and Ranger School.

The Combat Medic Course is taught at Fort Sam Houston, Texas and provided Sgt. Rippee with his EMT-B Certification and qualified him as a combat medic.

Following these courses, Sgt. Rippee attended the Special Operations Combat Medic Course at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The intensive six month course teaches extensive training in anatomy and physiology, kinetics of trauma, advanced trauma skills and procedures, Trauma Combat Casualty Care and combat trauma management. Sergeant Rippee also completed a one month emergency room/EMT rotation at Tampa General Hospital and Tampa Fire and Rescue in Tampa, Fla. Upon graduation, he received a certification in Advanced Tactical Practitioner.

Sergeant Rippee has deployed three times in support of the war on terror; twice to Iraq and once to Afghanistan. His awards include the Ranger Tab and Parachutists Badge, Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal for Valor, Army Achievement Medal Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and Army Service Ribbon.

Sergeant Rippee is the son of Antoinette Rippee of Richmond, Va., and Jeffrey Rippee of San Bernardino, Ca. In his spare time, Sgt. Rippee is an active crossfitter and guitar player.



**Spc. Gaelen Lowers**

**Family and friends of the 139th MP Co., 396 MP Battalion,, celebrate the return of their Soldiers from a year-long deployment to Iraq at Cottrell Field on Fort Stewart, Feb. 16.**

### WELCOME

from Page 1A

Many other friends and Family Members echoed Tifanie's sentiments.

"I want to hug the stuffings out of him. I want to hold his face and know he's here," said Holly Thompson, mother of Spc. Tony Thompson. "He's my baby, he's our Soldier, and he was over there protecting us. We're so proud of him. There is no limit for the amount of pride that we have for our son."

Specialist Thompson has some big plans for his return, said his fiancé, Daniele Inkenbrandt.

"We're getting married!" she exclaimed.

They were engaged for more than six months before Spc. Thompson deployed and now that he is home, they are both hearing wedding bells.

"I don't care if you are in the field here looking into the bleachers, or in the bleachers looking into the field here, this is a great sight," said Col. McRae. "I just want to say to the Soldiers of the 139th, 'Well done!' We hold your service in great esteem and are very proud of the work that you've done. On behalf of the United States of America, the Army and your Families, welcome home."

### Marne Voices Speak Out

*The Winter Olympics have been begun in Vancouver.  
If you were there, what would you be doing?*

"Cheering for the U.S.A. in all events."

**Kenny Richey**  
*Family Member*



"Watching snowboarding or participating in it myself."

**Staff Sgt. Michael Hearron**  
*3/15th Infantry*



"Shopping to keep warm."

**Tammy Hampton**  
*Family Member*



"Watching figure skating."

**Cathy Hansen**  
*Family Member*



"Watching speed skating and ice skating."

**Lt. Col. Michael Hampton**  
*HQ, 3rd ID*



"Watching ice skating."

**Alex Hearron**  
*Family Member*



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# ARMY FAMILY COVENANT: Keeping the Promise

## Stewart, Hunter commissary hours

The Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield commissary hours have undergone changes throughout the years for customer convenience. Listed below are the latest hours:

### Stewart

Store Manager Steven Young.  
767-2076

**Monday:** CLOSED  
**Tuesday:** EARLY BIRD (7:30-9 a.m.),  
9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
**Wednesday:** EARLY BIRD (7:30-9 a.m.), 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
**Thursday:** EARLY BIRD (7:30-9 a.m.), 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
**Friday:** EARLY BIRD (7:30-9 a.m.), 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
**Saturday:** 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
**Sunday:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### Hunter

Store Manager Ann-Marie Wyatt,  
315-5711

**Monday:** CLOSED  
**Tuesday:** EARLY BIRD (8-10 a.m.),  
10 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
**Wednesday:** EARLY BIRD (8-10 a.m.),  
10 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
**Thursday:** EARLY BIRD (8-10 a.m.),  
10 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
**Friday:** EARLY BIRD (8-10 a.m.),  
10 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
**Saturday:** EARLY BIRD (8-10 a.m.),  
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
**Sunday:** 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

## Commissary honors Covenant with continued improvements, deals

Jennifer Scales  
Fort Stewart Public Affairs

The Fort Stewart commissary has just undergone upgrades to make it just one of many military commissary projects which benefitted in the million dollar investment to make coming to an installation grocery store up-to-date and shopper friendly.

Who knew that shopping for items from grapes to Gatorade, bread to bananas, and pop to peanuts would become such a treat?

In order for customers to experience the surprises and changes, the Stewart commissary will close at 5 p.m, Sunday, remain closed Monday, and also remain closed an extra day Tuesday.

Normal operating hours will return March 3.

But get ready for shopping that will have customers returning more often than not for milk or mayonnaise!

A Customer Appreciation Sale begins at the Stewart commissary, 9 a.m., March 9. This one day sale will have items labeled as ‘great mega deals’, along with product demonstrations, giveaways, company mascots and more. This event is Fort Stewart specific as a special ‘Thank You’ for the inconvenience caused by the renovations over the past 18 months. Please take note though, that the commissary will not be open for Early Bird Shopping on this date.

Another date to lock away for memory is the Defense Commissary Agency worldwide case lot sales. Stewart’s sale dates are coming May 13-16. Hunter commissary sale dates are scheduled for May 20-22. During this time, commissary customers can save up to 50 percent or more on bulk sold products such items as pet supplies, canned goods, beverages, cleaning supplies, boxed meals, and more.

Whether you live at Stewart or Hunter, either commissary will meet your shopping needs for Soldiers and Families alike. Each offer convenient ATMs, bakeries, deli’s, along with regular purchase items.

But what is DeCA all about as it relates to those who



Jennifer Scales

**The Fort Stewart commissary, located at 200 Vilsek Rd., building 421, will be closed Tuesday, March 2. Get ready for their Customer Appreciation Sale, March 9.**

fall under the Army Covenant? The Defense Commissary Agency, founded in 1991, is responsible for all commissaries, regardless of military service. Prior to that time, each military service ran its own commissary.

Authorized shoppers include active duty, Family Members, National Guard and Reserves. The Defense Commissary Agency operates over 250 commissaries on military installation around the world.

Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5 percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases, compared to commercial prices—savings worth about \$3,300 annually for a Family of four.

A core military Family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to Family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their Families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.

So whether you visit the Stewart or Hunter installation, check out your commissaries. It’s worth the trip!

**Editor’s note:** Information for this article was also compiled from DeCA Web site, [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com).

### 67 Years of Helping the Army Take Care of Its Own...

#### Army Emergency Relief

You can help... participate in AER Campaign March 1 - May 15



## Ft. Stewart/Hunter Morale, Welfare & Recreation

### The Great MWR Yard Sale @ FS & HAAF

Sign-up 1 March-14 April; Sale 17 April

Club Stewart, Hunter Credit Union Parking Lots On-Post Housing



It’s never too early to start making plans to be a part of the Great MWR Yard Sale at Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield. All DoD ID cardholders eligible at \$5 per space. No charge for on-post housing participants. All sellers must sign-up at Sports Office, Bldg. 471, 767-8238 (FS) or Tominac Fitness Center, Bldg. 919, 315-2019 (HAAF). Sale is open to the public. Goodwill Industries will accept donations from 2 p.m. until truck is filled at both parking lots.

### “Spouse Field Exercise: Priceless Packages” Seminar @ Club Stewart

4 March, 5-9 p.m.; 5 March, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. – Club Stewart, Bldg. 405

Seminar presented by Fort Stewart FMWR along with Tara Crooks and Starlett Henderson, co-founders of Army Wife Network. Includes themed care package ideas, deployment survival tips and resources, networking, giveaways, gift bags, a complimentary meal, dessert and more. Online registration required at [www.ArmyWifeNetwork.com/user\\_event.php](http://www.ArmyWifeNetwork.com/user_event.php). Limited child care available. Reservations must be made with Stewart CYSS at 767-2312. Children must be registered with CYSS. More info: e-mail [FromTheField@ArmyWifeNetwork.com](mailto:FromTheField@ArmyWifeNetwork.com).

### Dave & Buster’s Trip

5 March Sign-Up Deadline; Trip 6 March – Jacksonville, Fla.

Depart Stewart Leisure Activities Center, Bldg. 443 for Jacksonville. Dave & Buster’s Million Dollar Midway is filled with latest interactive and video arcade games. Play games, enjoy great meals at the restaurants at your own expense. Cost is \$10 per person for transportation. Details: 767-2841.

### Sprint Triathlon & Duathlon @ HAAF

6 March, 9 a.m. Start – Tominac Fitness Center, Bldg 919

Event consists of 300-meter swim in Tominac Fitness Center Indoor Pool, 13.1-mile bike around Perimeter Road, and 3.2-mile run. Open to Soldiers, Family Members, Army Civilians and local community. Entry fees: \$65 (Individuals), \$100 (Teams). Pre-register at either “[www.active.com](http://www.active.com) or [savannahtriathlon.com](http://savannahtriathlon.com)” or at starting site. Active duty Soldiers only can use promo code “Hunter Army” and receive \$10 entry discount with Military ID on day of event. 315-2019.

### St. Patrick’s Day Brunch @ FS

7 March, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. – Club Stewart, Bldg. 405

Menu includes breakfast items, Guinness Stout Irish Stew, traditional corned beef w/grain mustard sauce, chicken with Irish cheese crust, soda bread, Grandma O’Leary’s steam buttered cabbage, candied carrots, parsley potatoes, sweet peas and baby onions, apple oatmeal crisp and assorted desserts. Plus, Irish beer tasting. Advance ticket discounted prices (\$2 off adults and \$1 off children) available at club information counters. Prices at Door: CPL & below: \$12.95 for adults, \$6.45 for children (ages 5-10), children (under age 5) FREE! SGT & above and All others: \$14.95 for adults, \$7.45 for children (ages 5-10), children (under age 5) FREE! 368-2212



### Coca-Cola College-Am Ohio Wesleyan Collegiate Invitational Golf Tournament

11 March College-Am; Tourney Play 12, 13 March – Hunter Golf Club, HAAF (College-AM): Sign-up deadline 10 March, event 11 March, 12:30 p.m. shotgun. Three person Amateur Scramble team, paired with #1 player from participating college. Open to all Military ID cardholders and civilian guest. Cost \$60 per person or \$180 for 3 person team (includes lunch, tournament & golf car fee, driving range balls, tournament social, prizes). (Ohio Wesleyan Collegiate Invitational Golf Tournament): 12,13 March, hosted by Hunter Golf. Come out and be part of the gallery and watch your favorite university compete against each other. For list of universities and details, call 315-9115.

### Universal Studios Trip

1 March Sign-up deadline; Trip 12-14 March – Orlando, Fla.

Depart FS Leisure Activities Center, Bldg. 443 for Orlando. Enjoy fun-filled weekend at Universal Studios. Cost \$275 includes lodging for 1-4 people per room & transportation. For details, call 767-2841.



# Education Matters



## DOD halts MyCAA program

The Department of Defense temporarily halted the Military Spouse Career Advancement Account, “MyCAA,” education and employment program on Feb. 16 in order to review procedures, financial assistance documents and the overall program, per Tommy T. Thomas, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense, Military Community and Family Policy. This pause will not affect spouses who have an SA document approval number for upcoming classes. During the temporary suspension, no new MyCAA accounts may be created, and no new financial assistance applications will be accepted. However, Military OneSource Spouse Education and Career Consultants can continue to provide career exploration, assessment, employment readiness and career search assistance to spouses. Military OneSource Spouse Education and Career Consultants can still provide education and training, career exploration, assessment, employment readiness and career search assistance. They can be reached toll-free at (800) 342-9647. For a complete list of other sources of financial assistance, go to [www.military-onesource.com](http://www.military-onesource.com), scroll down and select “MyCAA,” then click on “Alternative Educational Funding Opportunities.”

## Hope Grant for college credit offered

Of special interest to those who cannot use My CAA at this time, the Technical Communications Specialist program is a great option to fulfill the General Education Requirement courses for your degree. Under this particular certificate program, the Hope Grant will cover the cost of Composition and Rhetoric, Literature and Composition, College Algebra, Public Speaking, Psychology, Sociology and Computer Concepts. These classes can later be transferred to most other colleges and universities. Many other HOPE eligible diploma and certificate programs are offered by Savannah Technical College, Airport Rd in Hinesville. Some classes are even available on-line or in the Fort Stewart Education Center. For more information, click on [www.gsfc.org](http://www.gsfc.org) and [www.savannahtech.edu](http://www.savannahtech.edu) or call Savannah Tech: Education Center, 408-2430; Hinesville, 408-3024; Savannah, 443-5700.

## College registration now open

The upcoming Spring II term dates both on-post and distance learning classes are listed below. Some courses are offered during the day. Please contact the college directly for course schedules and enrollment information. Central Texas College – 767-2070/ Hunter Airfield, 315-4090, March 22 - May 15  
Columbia College – 767-5336/ Hunter Army Airfield, 352-8635, March 22 - May 15  
Embry Riddle – 767-0339/Hunter Army Airfield, 352-

5252, March 22 - May 23  
Savannah Tech – 408-2430, March 23 - June 14  
Webster University – 767-5357/ Hunter Army Airfield, 354-0033, March - May 13

## ASE testing available

Automotive Service Excellence certification testing will be administered only at the Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith Army Education Center on May 6, 11 and 13. The registration deadline is March 17. All military personnel are eligible to test. Soldiers should see the following individuals for ASE registration before the registration deadline: Olivia Penrod at Stewart (767-8331) or Ken Brown at Hunter (315-6130). The first three tests are free, but the Soldier must pay the \$36.00 registration fee. Recertification tests are not covered. Registration and additional test/recertification fees are due at the time of registration and are non-refundable. Examinees need to report at 8:45 a.m. on the exam dates, since testing will begin promptly at 9 a.m. Study materials can be obtained at [www.ase.com](http://www.ase.com). Click on the tabs: 1. “Prepare to Test” 2. “ASE Study Guides” 3. Select the specific test

## Merit scholarships offered

The Officers’ Spouses Club provides merit-based scholarships for eligible military Family Members. Applicants must be a spouse or unmarried dependent of an active duty, active duty reserve or National Guard member, retired or deceased member of the military who will be attending accredited institutions of secondary education. The application must be post marked no later than March 12. The Fort Stewart Enlisted Spouses Club promotes the The Rita Ackerman Scholarship for spouses of an active, retired or deceased enlisted Soldier and residing in the Stewart-Hunter area. Must be completed & mailed by April 1. Both applications are available at the education centers.

## Hunter Spouses' Club offers scholarships

The Hunter Spouses Club Scholarship Program will award scholarships to deserving students (HSC member or his/her spouse/child) to further their education. Scholarships will be awarded on the basis of academic achievement, citizenship, extra-curricular activities, letters of recommendation, and an essay. Enter their Web site, [www.hunterspousesclub.org/](http://www.hunterspousesclub.org/), select scholarships and download the application for complete details. Applications must be completed and mailed by March 20.

## AER Scholarships announced

Army Emergency Relief is offering need-based education assistance programs: Stateside Spouse Education Assistance and the Major General James Ursano

Scholarship Fund for Dependent Children. The application must be completed and mailed by March 1. Go to AER’s Web site, [www.aerhq.org/education.asp](http://www.aerhq.org/education.asp), for applications and complete details on the grants and other financial assistance.

## CTC Foundation Scholarships available

The Central Texas College Foundation provides 155 awards to competitively selected students every year. Foundation scholarships are both need and merit based. For more information, or to view a listing of available scholarships and eligibility criteria, go to [www.ctcd.edu/f\\_aid/2009-2010/scholarships.cfm](http://www.ctcd.edu/f_aid/2009-2010/scholarships.cfm) and click on “CTC Foundation.” In addition there is a institutional scholarship for an active duty or retired Marine Corps servicemember or immediate Family Member. See details by clicking on [www.ctcd.edu/marine/index.htm](http://www.ctcd.edu/marine/index.htm).

## Spouse scholarship offered

Spouses of military personnel can take their first classroom course free while they complete their financial aid paperwork and enrollment procedures with Columbia College. The active duty member does not have to be enrolled with Columbia College. In addition, Columbia offers spouses a 20 percent tuition discount for “in-seat” (classroom) courses. Call the Fort Stewart site at 877-3406 or dial 352-8635 at Hunter.

## Source available for Post-9/11 GI Bill

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, Chapter 33, is a non-contributory benefit (no up-front payment required by Soldiers) for those who served on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001. The Veterans Administration Web site at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) provides in-depth eligibility information and a link to the on-line application. It also includes all information and steps concerning transferability to Family Members. If you have questions after exploring the Web site, call 888-442-4551.

## Online academic skills course available

The Peterson’s Online Academic Skills Course is now available to all the services, DoD Civilians, and Family Members. OASC is designed for individuals who want to build their math and verbal skills to excel in their jobs, pass their exams, advance their careers, or continue their education. The course will diagnose the individual’s current level of reading comprehension, vocabulary, and math abilities and teach the concepts and skills needed to increase proficiency in each of these academic areas. This course is available free of charge and can be accessed on any computer at any time. To register, click on [www.petersons.com/dantes](http://www.petersons.com/dantes). The same site also provides free study resources for GED, SAT, CLEP, ASVAB, etc.

**For more information, visit**  
**[www.stewart.army.mil](http://www.stewart.army.mil)**  
**Team Stewart**

# Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield Briefs

## Weekend DFAC Hours

The Fort Stewart weekend dining facility for Feb. 27-28 is Vanguard Dining Facility, building 512. Fort Stewart dining facility weekend serving hours are 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. for brunch, and 3:30-5:30 p.m. for dinner.

The Hunter Army Airfield weekend dining facility for Feb. 27-28 is the 1/75 Ranger Dining Facility, building 110. Hunter Army Airfield dining facility weekend serving hours are 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for brunch, and 4:30-6 p.m. for dinner.

Weekend serving hours for the Warrior Transition Battalion dining facility, building 12902, in the National Guard training area are breakfast, 8-9:30 a.m.; lunch, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and dinner, 5-6:30 p.m.

## Recycle old phonebooks

You may wonder, how do I recycle my old telephone book? The Directorate of Public Works, Environmental has an answer. Place them in a plastic bag with other paper items and put it in a poly-cart or recycling dumpster. Off post collection sites are located throughout Liberty County to include the Liberty County Courthouse Annex, Flemington/ Midway/Riceboro/ Walthourville City Hall, YMCA, and the Liberty County Planning Commission. For more information, contact Amanda Hinesley at 767-4459.

## Smoking areas designated

Smoking is permitted in designated areas only. Per Fort Stewart Regulation 420-11, smoking areas will be designated by commanders/supervisors in accordance with Army Regulation 600-36. Proper receptacles shall be provided to dispose of smoking materials. Safety cans shall be emptied into trash containers only after they have been soaked with water.

For additional contact information contact the Fort Stewart Fire Prevention Office at 767-7006, or the Hunter Army Airfield Fire Prevention Office at 315-5075.

## Stewart

### OSC Mardi Gras basket auction

The Fort Stewart Officer's Spouses' Club would like you to come and participate in a wonderful night of fun and excitement at our Mardi Gras Basket Auction Extravaganza. It will be on March 3, 2010 from 6-9 p.m. in the Ball Room at Club Stewart. All proceeds will benefit the Fort Stewart Officer's Spouses' Club Scholarship Fund. This event is open to the public. Tickets are \$5 in advance or \$10 at the door, per person.

Tickets are now available to purchase at Shop of the Marne or from an OSC Board Member. Some of the activities include a Silent Auction, Live Auction, Opportunity Baskets, FRG "Float" Contest, and Karaoke. If you have any questions, please email Cat Pierce at FSOSCFundraising@gmail.com.

### Fort Stewart commissary hours to change

The Fort Stewart Commissary will close at 5 p.m., Sunday. The commissary will be closed as normal Monday, and will also be closed this Tuesday.

This unusual closure is to allow us the opportunity to reset the entire dry product section resulting in a better shopping experience for you, our military patron. Thank you in advance for your patience, and we apologize for

### Gate closures

Effective Monday, gate closures and operational hours will be changing for two gates on Fort Stewart. Gate 2, which is located off of South Main Street in Hinesville and Troupe Avenue on Fort Stewart, will be closed permanently until further notice.

Gate 3, which is located off of GA 47 and Harmon Avenue on Fort Stewart, will change its 24-hour operation to a 16-hour operation of 5 a.m. to 9 p.m.

any inconvenience this one-time change may cause.

### TMP hours reduced

The Transportation Motor Pool Operations business hours at Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield have been reduced. New operational hours are as follows:

Fort Stewart TMP business hours are 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Hunter Army Airfield TMP business hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Hunter Army Airfield Driver Testing will provide services, Monday and Friday.

For more information, contact Rita Johanson at 435-0153 or John Brinson, Fleet Manager/COR, at 435-0285.

### Gate 5 lanes now reduced

Until March 12, the Gulick Ave. Access Control Point (Gate #5) will be reduced to two lanes of traffic, one in-bound lane and one out-bound lane. Subject closure is necessary to upgrade the electronic system at the gate. Detour signs and traffic control devices will be displayed and posted for the closure duration.

Motorists are encouraged to avoid this area to minimize traffic congestion and to be alert to changes in traffic patterns around the area. For additional information, please contact Alan Trowhill, Corps of Engineers at 767-3287. We appreciate your patience during this construction effort.

## Hunter

### Fuel pump closed until Sunday

The fuel pumps at AAFES Hunter Corner Express will be closed until 8 a.m., Sunday, due to construction work. The shoppette and Popeye's will remain open, along with the Kiosk at South Perimeter Road.

Vacuums and air compressors will also be unavailable during this time.

### CYSS Grand Opening slated

DMWR/Child, Youth & School Services will hold a Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting for the new School Age Youth Services Facility at building 8805, 2599 S. Perimeter

Rd., Hunter Army Airfield, 9 a.m., Friday. The event will feature a ribbon cutting and Army Family Covenant re-signing. The newly constructed, 150 capacity, School Age Youth Services facility on Hunter will provide Before and After School Care for children and youth in grades 1-12.

The center will also serve as the site for youth dances and select SkiesUnlimited instructional classes, in addition to all middle school teen programs.

### Hunter Coin and Covenant meeting

Hunter Chapel's next Monthly Coin and Covenant meeting is 6-7:30 p.m., Tuesday. These meetings are for spouses of deployed servicemembers and are held to facilitate growing relationships and unite hearts across the miles.

Child care is free and food is provided for spouses and children. The March theme is love, honor and respect - learning ways to share your respect for your spouse.

If you are interested in an afternoon out of the house with food and fellowship for you and your children, please RSVP by calling 315-5515.



## Reduces hours during deploy-

**Army and Air Force Exchange Services hours have changed at Stewart-Hunter. Changes are as follows:**

**Troop Brigade:** Monday- Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Hunter Gas Kiosk:** Monday- Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday - Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Stewart Popeye's/AP:** Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Stewart Main Store:** Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Hunter Corner Express:** Monday- Friday, 5:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

**Hunter Popeye's/AP:** Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Hunter Military Clothing Sales Stores:** Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday, 12-5 p.m.

**Stewart Military Clothing Sales Stores:** Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Closed Sunday

**Bryan Village Shoppette:** Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

**Fort Stewart Main Shoppette:** Monday-Sunday, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

**Robin Hood:** Monday-Friday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday - Sunday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Cinnabon:** Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday - Sunday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



# Lightning Horse aircraft highlight partnership

Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall, Jr.  
TF Wings Public Affairs

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq** – One of the most critical milestones in Iraq’s future will be safe and secure elections for the people of Iraq, which are slated for March 7.

The Government of Iraq, Iraqi Security Forces and their U.S. counterparts recently took a resounding step toward that goal with a new security initiative.

The Combined Security Force, consisting of U. S. Forces from 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, 12th Iraqi Army Soldiers, Iraqi Police, and 1st Peshmerga Brigade Soldiers, graduated after 30 days of training. This unified force, known as the “Golden Lions,” showcased their skills, including air ground integration, during the graduation ceremony in front of senior GoI officials, Kirkuk provincial leaders, and Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, commander of United States Division-North, near Contingency Operating Site Warrior, in Kirkuk, Iraq, Feb. 15.

“The significance of today’s event is to show the people of Iraq, government officials, (and Iraqi and U.S. forces) the culmination of all the training that the Combined Security Force has gone through,” said Capt. Paul Horton, Fire Support Officer, 1/30th Inf., 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID. “It is to show that they are a capable, cohesive force that can work together for national unity to provide safe and secure elections.”

The demonstration showcased the CSF’s ability to integrate with aviation assets as they conduct full-spectrum operations. During the CSF’s validation exercise, a scout weapons team from 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Lightning Horse, conducted area security for a CSF patrol, followed by precision target acquisition.

“(The) 2/6th Cav. is our partnered unit and they work closely with us as part of this key and essential mission to (secure) the elections of Iraq,” said Lt. Col. Daniel Cormier, commander, 1/30th Inf., 2nd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. “Aviation assets have been (fully) integrated into our training. Everything from scout weapons teams to cold-load training, air movement to air assault training. And we plan on using all those capabilities for this force in the future.”

Additionally, fixed-wing close air support from F-16 fighter jets made an appearance, simulating an ordinance drop before UH-60L Blackhawks, from TF Lightning Horse, swept in with a CSF element to simulate an air assault during the course of the demonstration.

“The aircraft are a vital part of not just the demonstration but really the capabilities the Combined Security Force brings to the ground, whether it be OH-58D Kiowa Warriors or lift assets like Blackhawks or even fixed wing assets such as the F-16s and F-15 Strike Eagles,” Capt. Horton said. “That’s an asset that the Combined Security Force can call upon if their broth-



Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall

**Major General Tony Cucolo (center), commander, United States Division-North, renders a salute with (left to right) Maj. Gen. Ayad of the 12th Iraqi Army Division; Brig. Gen. Sherko of the 1st Peshmerga Brigade; Maj. Gen. Jamal, Kirkuk Provincial Director of Police; Maj. Gen. Kawa, commander, Kirkuk Training Center; and Col. Larry Swift, commander, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division; during a graduation and demonstration for the Combined Security Force, “Golden Lions,” at the Kirkuk Training Center, outside of Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Feb. 15.**

ers-in-arms need help. For example, if they run into troubles with IEDs, small-arms fire or house-borne IEDs, they can call upon those assets and we can push them out for support during their maneuvers.”

Equally as impressive as the demonstration was the crowd of spectators in attendance.

“We’ll have the provincial governor, the deputy governor. You’re going to see a lot of the candidates from political parties, and also the senior leadership of all the security forces in the province, to include Maj. Gen. Cucolo,” said Lt. Col. Cormier, prior to the graduation and CSF training exercise.

The Soldiers and policemen of the CSF are equally excited and up to the task of providing security for the elections and beyond.

“We are very happy to work with the Combined Security Force, and we are very happy the force exists here,” said Halo Omar Abdulla, a Peshmerga Soldier and platoon sergeant for the CSF. “This was almost a dream for many of us, for such a force to be here in Kirkuk. We hope to see it start working soon. It doesn’t matter how hard our training is or how hard they make us train – we don’t feel tired. We won’t give in.”

He added, “These are very, very important events to

us. The most important thing is we, as Kurds, Turkomen, and Arabs and the U.S. Forces, are working together.”

With this theme of teamwork and partnership, the CSF was also cognizant of the resources and capabilities the aviation assets of the Lightning Horse Squadron have brought to the fight.

“I think that aviation is a key enabler that we bring to the table, and it does a lot of things for us not only with reconnaissance and surveillance,” Lt. Col. Cormier said. “(It) also helps us diffuse any situation very rapidly and decisively because we gain a significant advantage when we have aviation involved.”

Captain Horton, who oversaw the execution of the graduation and demonstration agreed, adding his final thoughts.

“The 2-6th Cav. has done a great job supporting us with aerial (reaction) force training. They’ve also supported us with their Kiowa Warriors in pulling area security, area and route (reconnaissance), in support of (the CSF’s) validation exercises,” said Capt. Horton. “They’ve also supported us with photo recons for areas we sent the patrol out to do their validation on their graded patrols. They’ve been a great support; the 2/6th Cav. has been (awesome).”

## Spartan shooters train on intermediate-range targets

Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden,  
2nd HBCT Public Affairs

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq** – With a standard M16/A4 rifle, the average Soldier can engage targets up to 300 meters, while a skilled sniper can accurately and consistently hit targets more than 600 meters away.

It’s that “no-man’s land,” from 300 to 600 meters, that is of crucial concern to military planners and strategists.

Based upon their ability to estimate range, detect targets, and place effective, well-aimed fire on intermediate-range targets, a well-trained Squad Designated Marksman plays a significantly, vital role on today’s battlefield.

With more than 15 checkpoints and Joint Security Stations being manned throughout the Ninewa province, the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division has an unquestionable need for such trained marksmen.

Approximately 26 Soldiers from the 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID, recently gathered at FOB Marez, in Mosul, Iraq, for SDM training.

“The primary mission of the SDM, is that of a rifleman within an infantry squad,” said Staff Sgt. Jamie Peck, the brigade’s master gunner. “His duties as rifleman include firing, maneuvering and providing support for the other members of his squad, which take precedence over his duties as SDM.”

“Their secondary mission is to engage key targets from 0-500 meters, with effective, well-aimed fire, using the standard weapon system and standard ammunition. Since the SDM may not be equipped with an optical sight, he must possess a thorough understanding and mastery of the fundamentals of rifle marksmanship,” he added.

Supplementary skills, including a knowledge of ballistics, elevation and windage hold-offs, sight manipulation and range estimation, only enhance the SDM’s lethality. His abilities can also be used to help direct the fire of other squad members.

To qualify for the course, Soldiers had to meet select criteria. They had to be private through staff sergeant, so they would actually be used as a squad-designated marksmen; They had to have

qualified, at the least, as a sharpshooter; and finally, they could only use iron sights or long-range sights – no M68s, or CCO’s were allowed.

The brigade’s students were already good shooters, said Staff Sgt. Peck, it was just a matter of honing those skills.

Once the class was scheduled, Staff Sgt. Peck’s real work began. It was then a matter of finding a range to support the distances they’d be shooting, finding qualified instructors, coming up with a certified curriculum from the Fort Benning, Ga., school, building 10-foot targets, finding ammunition, and finally, finding qualified students.

Staff Sergeant Peck admits the classroom instruction portion, where students learned about ballistics and zeroing, wind and weather, range estimation, moving targets, angle shooting and shooter target analysis, may have been somewhat tedious.

However, once the instruction moved to the firing range, their competitive juices began to flow.

According to 1st Lt. Samuel Freeman, a platoon leader with Battery B, 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, the students were exposed to a wide variety of essential skills. For example, there were shooting stances, many of which are vastly different from Army standards. Students shot from prone, standing and kneeling positions, from distances of 50 to 450 meters, and fired a sequence of rounds in less than 10-second exposures.

Students had to engage targets rapidly with their focus on center target shots. Due to the limitations of the range, students were only able to fire at a maximum range of 450 meters.

As a five-time President’s Hundred award winner and Distinguished Rifleman #1370, 1st Lt. Freeman knows his way around weaponry. Besides serving as the class’ Officer-in-Charge, 1st Lt. Freeman was able to guide and mentor



Photos by Staff Sgt. Jamie Peck

**Students in the Squad Designated Marksman course offered at FOB Marez in Mosul, Iraq fire at designated targets from 400 meters away. The five-day course provided training for Soldiers to provide overwatch at checkpoints and Joint Security Stations in northern Iraq.**

the 2nd HBCT shooters throughout the five-day course.

“A lot of units have them, but they don’t know what they are. Two years ago, I found one in our arms room. They were like, ‘What do you want with that old thing?’ I knew exactly what I wanted with it. I’ve since found three others in my

battalion.

The class culminated with a shoot-off, which was won by Pfc. Jason Davis, a military policeman with the 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion. Private First Class Davis scored 356 points out of a possible 400, placing 79 of 80 rounds into the target to take home undisputed honors.



**Shooters check their targets during the Squad Designated Marksman course, offered at FOB Marez in Mosul, Iraq. The five-day course covered subjects such as ballistics, elevation and range estimation, allowing students to hit targets from 300-500 meters.**



# DPW recognized by Secretary of the Army

**Randy Murray**  
*Fort Stewart Public Affairs*

For a second year in a row, Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield has achieved recognition through the Secretary of the Army Environmental Award for Sustainability. Stewart-Hunter's Prevention and Compliance Branch of the Directorate of Public Works' Environmental Division has once again been recognized as Runner-up – Installation/Activity, according to Tressa Rutland, chief of the Prevention and Compliance Branch.

“We have institutionalized sustainability into the framework of Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield's overall operations and management,” explained Rutland, an environmental engineer who leads a staff of 23 government employees and 75 civilian contractors – subject matter experts that include other environmental engineers, chemical engineers, industrial engineers, civil engineers, biologists and specialized project managers.

“Our team is able to support the installation, our Soldiers and their Families and the community and still be good stewards of the environment.”

Rutland's team is used to accolades. The Prevention and Compliance Branch is responsible for improving and sustaining environmental resources that include

air quality, water quality, soil erosion and sedimentation control, and cultural resources such as wetlands and cemeteries.

Their success in accomplishing their mission has led to their receiving environmental quality awards from the Secretary of the Army in 2001, 2005, 2008 and, although yet to be awarded, 2009. She credits their reputation of achievement to not only their efforts to improve and sustain these environmental resources but also through their partnership with the community.

“Nobody wants a landfill in their backyard,” Rutland said, explaining that Fort Stewart maintains a landfill but that Liberty County does not. “We also have a recycle processing station on Fort Stewart, and we have invited Liberty County to bring recyclable material to our station.”

She said Stewart-Hunter's recycle program not only reduces the solid waste – paper, plastic, aluminum cans, etc. – going into its landfill; by allowing Liberty County to take part in the installation's recycle program, the community is able to reduce the amount of solid waste it ships to neighboring county landfills.

In addition to the Secretary of the Army award, the Prevention and Compliance Branch recently underwent an important inspection, the Environmental

Performance Assessment Survey. Rutland explained the survey is one of the tools used to evaluate whether the Prevention and Compliance Branch is still in compliance with ISO 14001, through which they were certified in 2005.

ISO 14001 is an international standards organization that sets requirements for environmental management systems as a means of confirming global relevance for an organization operating in an environmentally sustainable manner. She said the survey concluded with 10 findings, most of which were administrative issues, which were corrected on the spot. Rutland said these results show a tremendous improvement over their first audit in 2003, which had 52 findings.

“Overall, the audit confirmed that we are still in conformance with ISO 14001,” she said. “Our branch has been identified as a model for the Army for ISO 14001.”

As she pointed out that Stewart-Hunter's Prevention and Compliance Branch will now be competing for the Department of Defense level for the environmental sustainability award, she does not see awards as personal achievements.

“This isn't our award,” she said. “This award belongs to the installation, our Soldiers, their Families and the community.”

## Environmental Quality meeting lauds community efforts

**Pat Young**  
*Fort Stewart Public Affairs*

Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield held its quarterly Environmental Quality Control Committee Meeting at Club Stewart, Feb. 17, to recognize efforts and emphasis in the installation's Sustainability Management System.

Among the topics discussed were results from the recent Environmental Performance Assessment Survey conducted Feb. 1-5, highlights for the ongoing hunting season's progress, and presentation of the installation's quarterly recycling awards.

The EPAS, conducted by the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine reviewed the installation's compliance and Environmental Management System. The Scope of the review included air quality, cultural resources, hazardous waste, natural resources, forestry, petroleum, oil, and lubricants, storage tanks, water quality/drinking water, wastewater and storm water, operational noise and an Environmental Management System audit.

The results of the review recognized Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield was doing very well with its SMS program;

however, the Fort Stewart-Hunter Airfield Garrison Commander, Col. Kevin Milton pointed out there was always room for improvement.

The overall results showed Fort Stewart as being one of the Army's best SMS program supporters with the command providing accolades to natural resources and forestry; cultural resources; water quality; clean air act; hazardous waste; storage tanks and POLS; and storm-water programs.

The EQCC meeting also praised recycling efforts for two military units from Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield and two garrison organizations.

The 366th Chemical Company earned the Fort Stewart Recycling Unit of the Quarter at Stewart. The United States Army Dental Activity # 3 took home the prize at Hunter.

The Directorate of Logistics Field Logistics Readiness Center earned the title for the garrison organization at Stewart; and the Hunter Club won at Hunter. Each earned bragging rights as well as a check for \$1,000.

Another program that was highlighted at the EQCC meeting was the 2009-2010 hunting season. Although the small game season is scheduled to end Feb 28, it was noted Turkey season runs March 20 through May 15. Tim

Beaty, Supervisor for the DPW Fish & Wildlife Branch said during turkey season, feral hog season would be suspended; however, it would resume May 16.

Beaty noted that during the 2009-2010 hunting season, 321 deer, including 161 does and 160 bucks, were brought to the check station in regular season. He said 20 percent of the deer checked in were harvest by active duty or retired Soldiers.

Before the meeting ended, Col. Milton thanked everybody for helping make a difference. He said although sustainability is an Army mission, it is up to everyone to help take ownership of the program.

Two areas of emphasis for the next quarters identified was reducing contamination with the recycling program and protecting Personally Identifiable Information.

Colonel Milton said one way people can help the recycling program was to become active and help reduce contamination.

He said by taking time to empty out a soda bottle or rinse out a tin can, community members can help alleviate the waste caused by having those item spills on other recycled material.

Community members were also

asked to help protect Soldiers, Families, and the mission by scrutinizing PII, and shredding information that may compromise them.

It was announced at the meeting an on Marne messages that the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization, and Security in conjunction with the Directorate of Public Works, would sponsor an installation "Shred it, Don't Share It Days."

The 'Shred it, Don't Share it Days' program encourages community members to use their shredding resources when possible. The program also offers community members an opportunity to bring their PII to two shredding events.

The first was 1-3 p.m., Feb 22-24 at building 419 in the furniture store's parking lot on Fort Stewart. The other is 12:30 - 2:30 p.m., today at the Hunter PX parking lot. Community members can call the DPTMS Security Division at 767-1888 to learn more about their Shred it, Don't Share It Days program

Community members are encouraged to learn more about ongoing installation and 3rd Infantry Division activities available on the Team Stewart Web site, [www.stewart.army.mil](http://www.stewart.army.mil); and Task Force Marne Web site at [www.stewart.army.mil/tfn](http://www.stewart.army.mil/tfn).

## Corps activates FEST-A, new leader looks forward to serve

**Tracy Robillard**  
*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District*

An elite group of team members from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District officially activated at Hunter Army Airfield, Feb. 9, to form one of only eight specialized teams of its kind across the nation. This mobile, engineering support team stands ready to deploy with the Army on missions around the globe.

Known as the Forward Engineer Support Team - Advance, or FEST-A, Savannah's newest team is stationed at Hunter. As part of the 542nd Engineer Detachment, they join the Corps' national FEST-A effort with other teams in Baltimore, Seattle, Los Angeles, Honolulu, New York City, Fort Worth, Texas; and Anchorage, Alaska.

Like other FEST-A units, Savannah's team is a “one-stop shop,” providing professional solutions to complex engineering problems America's military may face.

Comprised of one officer in charge, a noncommissioned officer and six Corps of Engineers civilians, the team has the capability to deploy worldwide and provide a range of engineering support to military forces – from design, construction management and contracting to real estate, environmental and geo-spatial support.

For example, FEST-A teams deploy in the wake of natural disasters to assess structural damage, recommend plans for reconstruction and secure contracts to rebuild.

The team performs similar roles in combat situations, such as assessing war-torn buildings and infrastructure, providing planning and design support and managing re-construction.

“Although this team is only eight people deep, it has unbelievable capability,” said Maj. Gen. Todd Semonite, commander of the Corps' South Atlantic Division. “You've got a war fighter who understands combat and resourcing and planning; you've got an NCO who is an expert in execution on the ground; then you also bring this great depth of disciplines that the Corps' civilians represent. We have created a team that goes far beyond the talents of eight people – it's a network of synergy of great importance to our military.”

The Feb. 9 ceremony also served as a change-of-command between former FEST-A leader, Sgt. 1st Class William A. Griffith, and newly-appointed officer in charge, Maj. Jared E. Runge.

Sergeant First Class Griffith chose to name the

Savannah detachment the G.A.T.O.R.S., which stands for Global Assistance Team on Request – Savannah.

“The G.A.T.O.R.S. name represents the global awareness that the Corps has in the Army – that is the direction the FEST organization is going,” Sgt. 1st Class Griffith said. “We are combining the power and resources of America's Army with the expertise and skill of the Corps of Engineers. We are bridging the gap between the organizations, and the FEST-A is a valuable tool in the mission.”

The FEST-A civilians are Lon Lyford, mechanical engineer; Benjamin Dedjoe, electrical engineer; Pamela Funk, contracting specialist; Joel Fuchs, cartographer; Kathy Gaynor, environmental engineer; and Brett Wiliford, civil engineer.

“We are like the technical brains of the mission,” Dedjoe said. “We're not shooting weapons, but we go out and find engineering solutions in combat or disaster areas, or even during times of peace.”

“I knew it was going to be a challenge because FEST-A is a fairly new concept, but that's what I like about it,” Funk said. “I'm trying to develop the position of a contract specialist in a team of engineers, and sometimes that is a challenge.”

Like the civilian team members, the new FEST-A leader is also looking forward to the challenge.

“We are ready to deploy and provide great service wherever the Army may need us,” Maj. Runge said. “I want the team to prove itself to be so valuable to the military forces and civilian agencies we support, that they wonder how they ever lived without us.”

Yet FEST-A cannot look to the future without remembering its past – where Sgt. 1st Class Griffith played a huge role.

“All the great things that have happened with FEST-A are because of the hard work of Sgt. 1st Class Griffith,” said Savannah District Commander Col. Ed Kertis. “He took the FEST-A from a concept to a reality. In the last two years, he has built the team into a capable unit that is ready to deploy to real-world missions across the globe.”

Sergeant 1st Class Griffith joined the Savannah District in November 2007 as the sole member of the FEST-A. Before coming to the Corps, Sgt. 1st Class Griffith served 17 years with the Army at locations across the country and in Germany. He also deployed to Iraq in 2006 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

As the FEST-A noncommissioned officer in charge and the unit commander, Sgt. 1st Class Griffith led



Tracy Robillard

**Sergeant First Class William Griffith (left), outgoing commander of the Savannah FEST-A, passes the guidon to Col. Ed Kertis (right), Corps of Engineers Savannah District Commander, during a change of command ceremony at Hunter Army Airfield, Feb. 9. Major Jared Runge was appointed as the new commander of the FEST-A unit.**

the way in finding office space, a motor pool, logistical support and mission essential equipment, as well as trained civilian team members as they were hired to prepare them for upcoming missions.

Now, as he prepares for his next Army assignment, Sgt. 1st Class Griffith passed the guidon to Runge who will lead the team forward.

“I have big shoes to fill,” Maj. Runge said at the change of command. “Sergeant First Class Griffith has done a phenomenal job getting this team to where it is today.”

Major Runge, who joined the District in January, has served nearly 10 years as an Army engineer officer with multiple units at Fort Bragg, N.C., and deployed twice to Kuwait and Afghanistan.

He holds a bachelor's degree in geography from Brigham Young University in Utah, and a master's in construction management from Florida International University.



# Soldiers to take an active part in dining experience



**Spc. Monica K. Smith**  
*3rd CAB Public Affairs*

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** – On any given day, the menu may consist of steak, lobster, shrimp, brisket, cornbread, chicken and steak fajitas or hand-made burgers. In addition, options include a salad bar, dessert bar and sandwich bar. This isn't the weekly meal selection of a restaurant in downtown Savannah but the selection of the Marne Cafe in Bagram, Afghanistan.

As if the vast selection wasn't enough, Soldiers of the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, Marne Cafe, had a dining facility council meeting, Feb. 17 at the Marne Cafe to further improve Soldiers' dining experience.

"There are times when it won't taste just like mom's cooking, but there are other times when it's right on," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Boyce,

Spc. Monica K. Smith

**Specialist Lloyd Sepulveda, cook in Headquarters and Support Company, Task Force Workhorse, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Falcon, slices onions in preparation for lunch at the Marne Cafe on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Feb. 17.**

Headquarters and Support Company, TF Workhorse, TF Falcon and dining facility manager of the Marne Cafe. "There are days when not everyone is going to be totally happy with certain meals, and other days when they are pleased. We just want to know how we can improve their experience."

More than a dozen representatives, from each of the units under TF Falcon that dine at the Marne Cafe, attended the meeting. During the meeting, Sgt. 1st Class Boyce announced solutions to concerns previously brought to his attention.

One of the solutions included having a sandwich bar open beyond the normal dining hours to better serve air crews who may not have the opportunity to eat during meal times.

The dining facility council meeting is scheduled on the third Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. in the Marne Cafe.

Specialist Summer Sepeda, HSC, TF Workhorse, TF Falcon, says having these meetings helps Soldiers have direct access to those who can make changes to their daily meals.

"They get to know more about what Soldiers like and dislike," said Sepeda. "The dining facility is like a business. You have to know what your customers like."

## Cooks use culinary skills to provide for JSS India Soldiers

**Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden**  
*2nd HBCT Public Affairs*

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq** – If you gather a dozen cooks, ask each to prepare a simple dish, such as spaghetti from the same recipe, you would have a dozen different versions of spaghetti. Each cook would use a variety of techniques, with different results, based upon their tastes and experiences.

It's no different in the world of military food service, at least in the field.

Just ask Pvt. Tatiana Waddell and Spc. Rene Nava, both with Company E, 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. Private Waddell, 21, is from Garden Grove, Calif., and Spc. Nava, 38, is from Mission, Texas.

At a military dining facility, it's very strict and structured regarding how meals are prepared. Recipe cards must be followed to the letter. On the rare occasion, you can add a little of this or that, but, as a rule, you can't delete an item.

"In the field, you have the option of being able to enhance your meal or product," said Pvt. Waddell. "You have a certain amount of artistic freedom, as long as you don't go overboard. You get to put a little bit of your own personality into the food."

"We'll share methods and learn from each other. That way, you learn the best methods from others," said Spc. Nava. "Our sergeants will also give us advice on how to cook, but sometimes, they'll turn to us for the latest advice, since we're recent graduates from Advanced Individual Training."

For Spc. Nava, Pvt. Waddell, and the other food service specialists of the Joint Security Station India, located in Al Kindi, Iraq, the 20-foot by 20-foot containerized kitchen is where they weave their culinary magic on a daily basis.

Once their day is done, they will have provided

approximately 500 servings, which roughly translates into 2,000 pounds of meat, 40 cans of vegetables, 28 cases of soda, 13 cases of Gatorade and other varied and sundry items.

Typically, their work day begins at 6 a.m. Burners are fired up, the oven warmed, and cooking begins. However, their day can also start as early as 3 a.m. if they're preparing meals to be delivered to Soldiers manning the surrounding checkpoints.

Once dinner is over, preparations begin for the next day's meals. After the trailer is sanitized, anything frozen has to be removed from its boxes and the food is prepped for the next day's meal.

They must also ensure a Soldiers' daily dietary needs are met – proteins, such as meats, starches, vegetables, and "enhancements," such as hot pockets, pizza, hot dogs, and chicken tenders.

A former English teacher, Spc. Nava has been a member of the U.S. Army since June 2007. He'll graduate in May from Liberty Baptist College with a Masters of Religious Education degree. He plans on staying in the military and becoming a chaplain. Until then, he said, he's "serving food and serving God."

After working guest services at California's Knott's Berry Farm theme park, Pvt. Waddell sought bigger challenges.

"I didn't have a lot of discipline at home," she said. "I wanted to get away and do something different." She originally signed on as a medic, but became a cook instead, a move she hasn't regretted. "Cooking is the whole reason we're here. We're providing food for the Soldiers."

"There are times, when people don't think we do a lot, but we do," said Pvt. Waddell. "They see us on a break and think we're just sitting around. Everything we do is for them, but they don't see the behind-the-scenes preparation."

"Sometimes, I'm not in a good mood – I might be

mad, or I'm tired. Still, they thank you for the meal. They tell you 'It's delicious.' It makes it all worthwhile."

"I really enjoy the team-bonding, the camaraderie we share with each other," said Spc. Nava. "I also enjoy seeing the Soldiers and getting to know them and giving advice. I like reaching out to other people and helping out."

"The greatest part of this job is having daily contact with all the different Soldiers here," he said. "I wouldn't have met so many people if I hadn't worked here as a cook. You even get to know what it's like out there on patrol from the stories they tell."

Dining facility personnel are organized into three shifts. First, there's the "cooking team," that is responsible for preparing each day's meals. Then there's the "outside line" of Soldiers who serve the food and restock the salads, fruits, snacks, and sodas, as well as clean-up. Finally, there's the "KP" shift, that is responsible for doing the dishes and bringing food up to the line.

The Soldiers rotate on shifts and are allowed one day off per week. Whether it's an opportunity to sleep all day, do laundry, work out at the gym, call home, or even do homework, they have ample opportunity to unwind.

Specialist Nava said it's often the little things that help provide reassuring comfort for the JSS India Soldiers.

"They often sleep in their MRAPS, and this is a chance for them to have a hot meal," he said. "They ask me for little snacks, and I supply them. When they're at the checkpoints, often for hours and days, it's the little things - the coffee, drinks, snacks and cakes - that give them some comfort that we're able to provide for them."

And when all is said and done, they can reflect on a job well done, as well as the unspoken thanks of the JSS India Soldiers.





# Welcome home 48th Infantry Brigade!

Sgt. Jerry DeAvila, 124th MPAD, Georgia Army National Guard

**Georgia Guardsmen from Springfield's Battery A, 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery, 48th Infantry Brigade, Georgia Army National Guard, embrace each other after arriving safely back in Georgia at Savannah's Hunter Army Airfield, Feb. 23. The more than 100 artillerymen spent a year in Afghanistan helping the Afghan Army and National Police become more efficient at taking over the security of their country.**

# Class is a blast for 1/15 Inf Soldiers

**Staff Sgt. Natalie Hedrick**  
*3rd HBCT Public Affairs Office*

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE ECHO, Iraq** – “This is the only thing I was looking forward to,” said Cpl. Sean Taylor, Company B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, in between the series of explosions.

Corporal Taylor was on day nine of the 15-day, 1/15 Inf. Team Leader course which began Feb. 1 at FOB Echo. He, along with fellow “Can-Do” Soldiers and two Soldiers from the 8th Iraqi Army Division, were completing four days of demolition training.

“When they get done with these classes, I guarantee most of them will say this is the most fun they’ve had in the course,” said Staff Sgt. Robie Stricklin, an engineer from Company E, 1/15 Inf.

Open to Soldiers new to the team leader position, the course allows Soldiers to test their skills in areas like demolition, mechanical breach, shotgun breach, reflexive fire, technicalities of different weapon systems, communication and first aid. Students also learn the roles and responsibilities of several positions in the noncommissioned officer corps.

“It gives team leaders a chance to reaffirm training and new skills to improve the organization and accomplish the mission,” said Staff Sgt. Conrad Slyder, from Company B, 1/15 Inf.

“This course is a compact version of everything we joined the Army to do,” Cpl. Taylor added.

The Team Leader Course is designed to expose new team leaders to variety of military occupational skills, including infantrymen, medics, mechanics, and military policemen. Many of the students agreed the demolition was their favorite class.

“The other stuff we get to do every day,” Cpl. Taylor, an infantryman said. “We don’t get to do stuff like this every day.”



Staff Sgt. Natalie Hedrick

**Sergeant Robert Morrell, HHC, 1/15th Inf. Regt., 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. places his window charge during a demolition class, Feb. 9 as part of the battalion, Team Leader Course at Forward Operating Base Echo, Iraq.**

Staff Sergeant Slyder agreed, “The demolition is my favorite because we get to blow stuff up. I’ve never done that before.”

Private Hassan Badder, one of two 8th IA Division Soldiers going through the course, found he was treated no differently than the American Soldiers he trained beside. Badder said he thought the Team Leader Course was very exciting and, since he was one of the few from his unit to go through the course, felt confident in taking what he learned back to his fellow Iraqi Soldiers.

The Team Leader Course was only one of the many opportunities Soldiers from the 8th Iraqi Army Division were able to train with their American counterparts.

Several feet away, under the protection of a maintenance bay, three 8th IA Division drivers were elbow deep in grease and oil.

“My drivers need to improve their levels of training,” said Maj. Hussain Aziz, commander of Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 30th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division. “With the help of Coalition Forces, they learn the correct maintenance of vehicles, especially Humvees.”

Major Aziz said the Soldiers from the 1/15 Inf. are training his Soldiers on new technology that could benefit his unit.

Major Aziz feels confident that his Soldiers will be able to take their new found knowledge back to their unit’s. Staff Sergeant Stricklin, from an instructor's perspective, agreed.

“These skills are definitely ones they can teach their Soldiers,” he said. “It’s important they know this stuff.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Radhi, 8th Iraqi Army Division, sees the importance of noncommissioned officers, Iraqi and American alike, taking what they have learned to train their Soldiers. He explained in the old Iraqi Army, there was no such responsibility for the corps.

“One of our main focuses now is to educate the officers on the role of the NCO in the Army,” he said. “We are trying to give more responsibility to our NCOs. We are trying to model them off the NCOs in the U.S. Army.”

## AVALANCHE—

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Those with serious injuries were taken to the Craig Joint Theater Hospital to be treated. Task Force Falcon medics worked to 9 p.m. that evening, returning the next morning at 5 a.m. More than 260 patients were helped and many of them were able to leave the following day.

“The U.S. mission here in Afghanistan is a difficult one because the people who are wearing an Afghan National Security Force uniform today may be the same ones who are planting an IED tomorrow,” said Hall. “Being able to provide assistance to these people today was an honor, not just because it will hopefully plant a seed that will change the hearts and minds, but because providing care to those in need is what we do.”



# CAB Soldiers train Afghan counterparts

**Spc. Monica K. Smith**  
3rd CAB Public Affairs

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** – As the rotor blades began to turn, two Afghan National Army Air Corps crew chiefs studied every movement of their American counterparts. It was the first flight day for the five ANAAC crew chiefs taking part of the Afghan National Security Force Crew Chief Academy, created by the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, at Bagram Airfield, Feb. 20.

“We wanted to show them how crew coordination works,” said Staff Sgt. James Parker, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF Brawler, 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, and academy instructor. “You have a limited ability to teach in the classroom, even with our simulator. Here they actually see what we do, and I think a light-bulb clicked on.”

During the three Blackhawk flights, two TF Falcon crew chiefs sat in their normal positions, manning the door gun while making and responding to calls.

An interpreter sat in the middle of the first row of seats next to the TF Falcon crew chiefs with an ANAAC crew chief sitting on either side. All wore headsets, and as the TF Falcon crew chiefs communicated with their pilots and each other, the interpreter then explained to ANAAC crew chiefs what was being said.

“With the initial flight we wanted them to listen to how we make calls and how we respond to calls during flight,” said Sgt. Matthew West, Company A, TF Knighthawk, 3rd CAB, TF Falcon. “We want them to understand the importance of communicating with the pilots.”

The ANAAC crew chief’s first flight day came a week after the opening of the academy and after five days of classroom academics.

During the past week, the crew

chiefs were instructed on lessons such as how to prepare an aircraft for flight, how to wear a flight vest and attach it to the air craft, in addition to how to communicate with one another during flight.

“They’re picking it up very fast; every day they learn something new,” said Sgt. West. “We ask them basic questions at the end of the day, and they answer them all, so we know they’re learning the material and understanding it. Their enthusiasm is high, and they pay attention in class.”

For Abdul Wali, one of the ANAAC crew chiefs, he says his enthusiasm and willingness to pay attention in class is based on 27 years of wanting to be a crew chief.

“I wanted to be a crew chief because I want to help my country and I like this job – and flying,” said Wali. “Today we saw what we are supposed to be doing, and that’s the important part. We learned what we need to do and what (the 3rd CAB flight crews do) so, in the future, we can fly missions together.”

The academy is one of two academies within the TF Falcon Combined Action Program, the other being the ANSF Air Assault Academy. After graduating the Crew Chief Academy, the ANAAC crew chiefs will immediately begin air assault training with the opening day scheduled for March 6 at Bagram Airfield. The Air Assault Academy will not only include ANAAC Soldiers but also ANA commandos.



Photos by Spc. Monica K. Smith

**ABOVE:** A member of the Afghan National Army Air Corps Crew Chief Academy tests his flight vest by leaning out of a Blackhawk as Staff Sgt. James Parker, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Brawler, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Falcon and academy instructor, explains how the vest works in preparation for their first flight, Feb. 18 at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.



**LEFT:** Members of the Afghan National Army Air Corps Crew Chief Academy, fasten themselves to the seats of a Blackhawk prior to their first flight, Feb. 20 at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

## CHOSEN

from Page 1A

The team is made up of approximately 15 hand-picked Soldiers, and has supported the battalion since May of 2009. They started working together back home at Fort Stewart. The Soldiers were selected from different companies in the 1/64th Armor to be a part of the PSD, each of them bringing their own unique capabilities to the team.

“We pulled tankers, infantrymen, drivers...a line medic, communication specialist and mechanic from the different companies,” said Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Taylor, the platoon sergeant for the PSD. “They are the enablers that help us and help everyone in the battalion accomplish the mission whenever assistance is needed.”

“Lieutenant Colonel Richard Coffman, Command Sgt. Maj. Frankie Thumhart, the battalion commander and command sergeant major, Staff Sgt. Bryan Spears, the PSD squad leader, and myself built the PSD from nothing,” Sgt. 1st Class Taylor

“We pulled tankers, infantrymen, drivers...a line medic, communication specialist and mechanic from the different companies.”

**Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Taylor**  
PSD platoon sergeant

said. He, along with Staff Sgt. Spears, ensures that all missions are planned, resourced and conducted properly.

A team like the PSD is not built overnight. Part of the initial training the Soldiers went through after being selected for the team included establishing internal standard operating procedures, sharpening their tactical Soldiering skills, convoy training, and rifle and gunnery marksmanship as well as going through a series of extensive exercises back at their home station.

“Kuwait is where we sealed the deal,” Sgt. 1st Class Taylor said. “The team went through PSD-specific lanes, executing the procedures they had learned months prior to this deployment.”

Part of the PSD’s responsibilities include ensuring that Lt. Col. Coffman and Command Sgt. Major Thumhart have the ability to arrive anywhere in the “Rogue” area of operations safely and have the freedom of movement to successfully accomplish any mission, Sgt. 1st Class Taylor said.

Although some of these missions include providing security for the commander and command sergeant major while they conduct battlefield circulations throughout different areas, the PSD is not limited to these types of taskings.

“They are the asset that gives the battalion assistance to get certain personnel, such as the battalion chaplain or a subject matter expert, to the right place at the right time, securely,” Lt. Col. Coffman said.

Their job involves more than the safe transport of people. If supplies need to be delivered to certain remote checkpoints or bases, the PSD is that link to getting those missions accomplished. Other missions that the PSD supports include traveling to different checkpoints and working on company, battalion and brigade-level combined operations with Iraqi forces, as well as route security missions.

A typical day for the PSD starts out with the team meeting by their four Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles and conducting preventative maintenance checks and services on them, making sure that there are no leaks, broken hoses or lines, and that all systems work properly and nothing is out of place.

Once the proper maintenance checks have been made and deficiencies corrected, the team waits for the daily mission briefing; however, some days, the mission doesn’t always go as planned.

If routes are suddenly declared “red,” or unsafe, the team must find an alternate route or wait until the routes are “green” or safe to travel on.

If a mission is delayed, the troops don’t hesitate to use the extra time. They stock up on items for the long day ahead, and ensure the communication lines are working. Once these critical tasks are complete, the men find ways to have fun and relieve some stress. For some, that includes wrestling or a quick game of football, keeping morale high for the day.

As soon as the conditions are green, it only takes a single call to get the team geared up, on the trucks and ready to go. With their weapons postured correctly for their mission, the teams roll out past the wire, ready to complete their mission.

“The PSD has traveled over 7,900 miles – a great number of miles to have accomplished,” Lt. Col. Coffman said.

Being a member of the PSD, and the Army in general, requires Soldiers to be flexible with their time. Although some missions promise an early return,



Spc. Cassandra Monroe

**Sergeant First Class Thomas Taylor, an infantryman and platoon sergeant with the battalion commander’s personal security detachment for 1st Battalion, 64th Armor, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, observes the surroundings in a courtyard during a base closure ceremony at JSS Scorpion, Ninewa province, Iraq, Feb. 3.**

that might not always be the case.

“The PSD represents the entire battalion,” Lt. Col. Coffman said. “They have a mission and execute it every day. They are given a myriad of tasks and a tremendous amount to accomplish, and they get the job done, with little to no sleep at times.”

For some, serving on the team is enough to make their deployment and time working on the PSD worthwhile.

“Just being able to serve the command team and make sure that they are able to do their thing is enough for me,” said Spc. Christopher Norris, a vehicle mechanic with the 1/64th Armor.

One thing members of the PSD can agree on is the fact that being a part of this close-knit unit is like having Family.

“We are pretty much Family away from home,” said Spc. Norris. “I like the people I work with. We work a lot, but we make it fun too. I enjoy being able to be a part of some of the outside missions besides working with tools and wrenches.”

Another thing members of the PSD can agree on is the many years of deployment experiences they bring together. Many of the Soldiers are on their second, third or even fourth deployment, which helps add to the experience that makes the PSD so successful in their missions.

“This is a small specialty platoon, but it is a direct result of what we built,” said Sgt. 1st Class Taylor, who is on his third deployment. “That’s what makes this deployment with the PSD special to me. We shaped and trained them so that they would be on the same page of music.”



# Spartans find weapons cache in Mosul

**Maj. Stephen Holt**  
*2nd HBCT Public Affairs*

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq - U.S.** Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division, and the Iraqi army collected a large weapons and explosives cache in Ninawa province, Feb. 7.

The combined forces acted on a tip that led them to a house located in the Al Zuhier neighborhood of Mosul. When they discovered the extent of the cache, they called in an explosive ordnance disposal company.

Members of the 38th EOD, attached to the 2nd Brigade Heavy Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, responded and discovered even more weapons and bomb-making materials throughout the house and behind false walls.

The following items were discovered in the cache: 26 AK-47 assault rifles, four Russian RPK/RPD 7.62mm squad automatic weapons, four long rifles of unknown origin, one bolt-action rifle of unknown origin, one sterling 9mm machine gun, one .22 cal. hand gun, 700 60mm mortar rounds, 125 82mm rounds, 100 mortar primers, 35 rocket-propelled grenade motors, three rocket launchers, seven RPG launchers, 40 grenades of unknown model and 50 Russian RGE-5 grenades.

The troops also confiscated several thousand Iraqi dinar and an Iraqi gas mask, as well as American mili-



tary products, including a pair of night vision goggles, numerous optical weapon sights, five military-issue bulletproof ballistic armor plates and four body armor vests.

The cache further contained infrared sensors, wiring and IED electronic components, nine Iraqi license plates, more than 10,000 rounds of 7.62mm machine gun ammunition, several thousand feet of detonation cord, several thousand feet of explosive time fuse, seven boxes of projectile fuses, 30 pounds of rocket propellant and 10 boxes of 14.5mm ammunition.

"I was amazed at how much work they had actually taken to plaster the walls up to make them look like the rest of the room. That's a lot of work to hide

something," said 1st Sgt. Jeremiah Raemhild, 38th EOD. "It definitely was a long-term storage site for the weapons."

It took about six hours for the Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers to move the ordnance and weapons to waiting trucks, said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Barker, 38th EOD. "We pulled out hundreds of pieces of ordnance, mortar tubes, AK-47s, projectiles, and improvised explosive device materials," he said.

The Iraqi Army collected the equipment they could use. The rest, including all the electronic components and cell phones, was tagged, recorded and sent away for analysis. Specialists will look them over to answer questions, like where the weapons came from, or what current techniques bomb-makers are using.

"We're trying to get Mosul back to a state of normalcy," said Sgt. Jeremy Robinette, 38th EOD. "Taking the weapons from this cache off the streets will create a better environment where Iraqi kids can grow up."

During Sgt. Robinette's first deployment to Iraq, his team leader lost part of his arm and leg to an IED. Finding the cache was a big payoff, and he said it was a reward for all of the hard work his EOD company was doing.

Robinette said the unit is making a difference. "We saved lives that night," he said. "We took assets away that could have been used in complex attacks or indirect fire, with minimal risk and loss. We've made Mosul a safer place."